

mass of metal excited some apprehension; still the casting has been perfectly successful, and thus the half of that—the largest of modern statues—is completed, this piece alone weighing 500 cwt.

H. N. Emperor Ferdinand of Austria—has, in filial piety, undertaken to erect a statue to his late parent. It has been cast by Cavaliere Marchesi, at Milan, and thence transported to Vienna, not without great difficulty, as its weight amounts (with the packing) to 250 cwt. J. L.—v.

RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

Two recent stoppage of the atmospheric traction on the Croydon line, it appears, has not been merely owing to the melting of the sealing composition by the heat of the sun. The substitution of thin steel plates on this line, in place of the upper strips of leather along the valve, as on the Dalkey section of the Dublin and Kingstown line, instead of being an improvement, has been found to constitute "one of the greatest possible hindrances to the proper development of the system; inasmuch as nearly the whole of the thin steel plates have been snapped asunder, so that the sharp edges came in contact with the leather each time the valve rose, in many instances cutting it completely through; and hence the vast increase of leakage, and consequent decrease of power." A return is being made to the double leather system, and a new sealing composition has been invented, which, it is said, will withstand the usual effects of a wide range of temperature. The line was to recommence working during the present week.

—The Brighton, Lewes, and Hastings line is to be opened to-day from Lewes (to which place it was opened on the 8th ult.) to St. Leonards. From Lewes to Hastings the line is at present a single one. The chief engineer is Mr. Rastrick. From St. Leonards to Westham Mr. Kirby has had the superintendence; from Westham to Glynde, Mr. Harrison; and from Glynde to Brighton, Mr. Meredith. The contractor, Mr. Wythes, commenced operations in 1844, but the greater portion of the land could not be obtained till about twelve months ago. Mr. Fabian, of Brighton, is the contractor for the permanent station at Lewes, and the temporary sheds along the whole line, all which are in a forward state. —The double line of the Taff Vale railway has been opened and at work since Whit Monday. It is a curious and important fact, stated by the *Cambrian*, that "while the traffic upon the Taff Vale railway taxes the utmost capabilities of the line to accomplish, that upon the Glamorgan canal, which runs almost parallel to it, also increases. The Act of Parliament governing the latter undertaking," continues the *Cambrian*, "limits the dividend to eight per cent. per annum; and it is said, that the company can afford to carry goods for six months out of twelve gratis, and yet realise a sufficient income to pay the whole of the expenses of the concern, as well as the maximum dividend allowed by the Act." —The works on the Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton line are begun. A shaft has been sunk for a tunnel of about 200 yards near the site of the Worcester station. —The Ipswich and Bury line, it is said, will be ready for opening in October. In consequence of the heat, the works have of late been in progress by night instead of by day. —From thirty to forty acres of ling or heath were burnt on Saturday before last on the Norwich side of the Thetford station on the Norfolk line, in consequence of some fire falling from an engine furnace; the heath was chiefly the property of the poor of Bridgeham. —The Lincoln and Nottingham line is to be opened on the 4th of August. —It is said that 2,000 lb. worth of gunpowder has been spent in the blasting of one cutting on the Leeds and Bradford line, near Kirtall. —The Filey railway, a branch of the York and Scarborough, is in rapid progress, and will also be opened in August. It is nearing in other extensive improvements. Several acres on the Spa cliff have been appropriated as a promenade, and the avenues to the Spa well have been greatly improved. A new hotel on a great scale, with baths, promenade, assembly-room, &c., is nearly finished. —The Bridlington branch of the Hull and Selby line is also in rapid progress in the vicinity of Driffield. Messrs.

Brown and Hall, builders, Leeds, are busy with the stations, &c., between Beverley and Driffield; and the Driffield station, it is thought, will much improve the main street of the town. —Middlesborough, the line between which and Redcar was lately opened, presents a striking proof of what enterprise can effect. Some few years ago it was a mere nothing; now it has its well-built houses, its large iron foundry, the property of Messrs. Bolekew and Vaughan, who employ about 300 people, its potteries, and other manufactories, and not least of all (at all events in size) its docks. The number of its inhabitants is estimated at about 9,000, a great part of whom have left other towns on the Yorkshire coast, and enjoy there a better subsistence than they could obtain elsewhere. —The precedent established by the case of *Walsall v. Spottiswoode* has been confirmed by Mr. Justice Erle and a special jury at the Court of Common Pleas in the case of *Montner v. Sharp*, and is increasing the business of the lawyers, since scrip-holders have in consequence begun to manifest great anxiety to have accounts investigated, and deposits repaid; and have even refused, in a number of instances, to receive the sums proposed to be repaid, on the "winding-up" of defunct schemes. Much injustice seems involved in the decisions.

CANVASSING ARCHITECTS.

Sir, —I cannot exactly see the joke of your Birkenhead correspondent, relative to the degree of respectability that would be conferred on the architect by his "traveller," nor can I perceive how he would secure the execution of his work, more than the carpenter, the bricklayer, or even the pot-house keeper, who dare usurp the title, as all would depend on the address of the *commis voyageur*.

Some years ago, I remember a case of competition, where five architects were invited to send in designs for a public building. Three were regularly educated, the fourth had been a scene painter, and the fifth was a bag-man, travelling with his folio of highly-coloured drawings, and some even framed and glazed. The drawings were to be all in plain Indian ink.

The bag-man was accompanied by a cad, or folio-bearer, and to obtain a second chance, he made a second design. Now, as he was building another edifice in the same place, which, during the consideration of the designs, the committee had found out would cost at least thrice the amount of his estimate, they paused, and two (the most shallow-paced), who advocated his design, finding their protégé would have no chance, proposed that the votes of the subscribers to the building should decide. Canvassing began, but the wondrous elasticity of his estimate threw him out, and another would have been appointed, but the folio-bearer was made to volunteer the sixth design. I should have observed, that the three regular professional men declined the canvassing; the battle was between the bag-man and the scene painter; but the bag-man proved, through the folio-bearer, the victor, and the committee have a monument which covers their irregular ground, shews its deformity, and by the utter lack of composition throughout the work, proves their incompetency to judge. Moreover, by some of their recent decisions, they shew that they have not advanced one step during a space of nearly twenty years.

The only honest plan is to submit the designs (all to one scale, and tinted in the same manner) to two or three professional men of character; compensate them for their time, and act upon their decision. Then may we expect to have substantial as well as ornamental works executed; and the architect will take his place, which has been too long occupied by veneer and compe in the shape of ignorant pretenders. —I am, Sir, &c.

INCREASE OF DOCKS AT LIVERPOOL.—In the year 1815 they had 52 acres of docks and basins at Liverpool; the tonnage was 709,349 tons. In 1825, there were 71 acres of docks and basins, and the tonnage was 1,233,820. In 1835, there were 99 acres of docks and basins, and the tonnage had increased to 1,768,426. In 1845, the docks and basins had increased to 120 acres, and the tonnage to 3,016,331.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS, &c.

On Saturday last, an influential meeting, attended by the Duke of Cambridge (as chairman), the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, Lord Ashley, &c., was held in the new hall at King's College, for the purpose of providing a larger hospital for poor patients than that now in use in connection with the college, and to exonerate the medical officers, and relieve them from the responsibilities voluntarily incurred in the purchase of a site for the new building, which is to be erected in the immediate vicinity of the college, at a cost of between 3,000*l.* and 4,000*l.* By removal of the great number of old houses which stand upon this ground, a large space will be cleared, and facilities afforded for obtaining that direct communication between the Strand and Lincoln's-Inn-fields, which has been so long desired. The sum of 2,500*l.* has been already subscribed; Miss Bordett Coutts (now known, by the way, as the munificent and sole founder of the two colonial bishoprics, lately spoken of) contributed the princely sum of 500*l.* towards this praiseworthy object. In course of the proceedings it was stated by Lord Ashley, and corroborated by the Duke of Cambridge, that, in proportion to the population, Paris, St. Petersburg, and Vienna surpass London in the amount of such accommodations. —On Saturday before last a great many gentlemen connected with private schools or academies in town and country, met at the Freemason's Tavern to elect a council for the foundation of a college for schoolmasters. —On the preceding Thursday, the foundation-stone of the Camden District Schools was laid by Mr. H. Kemble, M.P., for East Surrey. The design is by Mr. F. J. Francis. Messrs. Rand and C. Curtis, of Stratford, are the builders. —The following inscription is now being cut in the north-west corner recess of the colonnade of the Royal Exchange:—

On this site
Sir Thomas Gresham
Erected the first building for the meetings of
The merchants of Great Britain,
Which was named by
Queen Elizabeth
The Royal Exchange,
January xxiii., mdcxii.
It was destroyed
In the Great Fire of London,
September iv., mdcxvi.
In the reign of King Charles the Second.
It was rebuilt,
And opened September xxviii., mdcxix.
On January x., mcccxxxviii.,
The Exchange was again destroyed by fire,
And on January xvii., mcccxxxiii.,
The first stone of this building was laid by
Her Majesty's Consort,
His Royal Highness Prince Albert.
The present edifice
Was also opened by
The Queen of England,
Victoria,
On October xxviii., mcccxlvi.,
Who proclaimed it
The Royal Exchange.
William Tite, F.R.S., Architect.

Objections have been taken to the meaning of the latter part of this inscription, where it is stated that "The present edifice was also opened by the Queen of England, Victoria." The intention is, evidently, to shew that this building, as well as the first, was opened by a Queen of England.

In the south-west corner recess are engraved the names of the members of the Joint Gresham Committee at the opening of the Exchange. —The establishment of a Joint Stock Company, with a capital of 2,000,000*l.*, is talked of, for the supply of the metropolis with pure soft water by means of Artesian wells. —The reference for the purchase of the houses projecting into the street at Field-lane, Hulbourn-bridge, made on the 26th June last to the London Bridge Approaches Committee, appears now to constitute the only hope of the removal of the obstructive nuisance at Holborn-hill and its dangerous vicinity. Till lately it was hoped that the evil would be remedied by the introduction of railways into Farringdon-street—the Direct Manchester Company in fact had actually scheduled the projected improvement, but the project has failed. The London Bridge Improvement Committee have been instructed to report forthwith upon this subject. —The railway companies having